(c) if so, what steps Government propose to educate extension workers for use of traditional pesticides for farmers ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) State Agricultural Extension agencies advise farmers on the use of various inputs, including chemical fertilizers, based on recommendations of ICAR Institutes/States Agricultural Universities.

(c) IPM demonstration-cum-training programmes are being conducted to popularise and propogate IPM technology including need based use of pesticides among the State extension functionaries and farmers. Traditional pesticides are required to be used as a last resort under the ambit of Integrated pest Management (IPM) on the basis of Economic Threshold Levels (ETL). To determine ETL rapid roving surveys are undertaken to forewarn the farmers about timely plant protection measures. Efforts have been made to provide safer and selective pesticides even for need based application.

Boosting up of Agricultural Exports

1314. SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is a proposal to invest Rs. 650 crores for infrastructure creation to boost agricultural export;

(b) if so, the details of this proposal; and

(c) what are the projects on which this amount would be spent ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM) : (a) to (c) The proposal for preparing an Export Enhancement Programme for Horticulture Produce is at a preliminary stage of consideration. The proposal envisages an investment of Rs. 662.56 crores including Government's budgetary support of Rs. 239.50 crores. The investments are proposed to be focussed on development of infrastructural facilities, promotion of export-oriented production and export promotion/market development measures.

Food Production in the Country

1315. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have worked out any strategy to meet the shortage of food production by the turn of the century because the country's population is likely to grow to one billion and will require at least 220 million tons against 175 million tons at present; and

(b) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM) : (a) and (b) The Government have worked out the following strategy to increase foodgrains production in the country :

(i) Expansion of area under location specific high yield varieties;

(ii) Increased use of quality seeds;

(iii) Increased and efficient use of fertilizers;

(iv) Propagation of adoption of rainfed farming technology for stablisation of production in rainfed areas;

(v) Efficient use of irrigation water and expansion of area under irrigation.

(vi) Adequate plant protection measures over larger area and propagation of adoption of Integrated Post Management Approach;

(vii) Training of farmers and extension workers and organisation of field demonstrations on farmers' field for the effective transfer of improved production technology;

(viii) Transfer of technology through reorganised extension system training and visits, etc.

To implement the above strategy the Government of India have launched a number of crop production programmes for crops like Rice, Wheat, Maize & Millets and Pulses in identified States of the country. Through these programmes, incentives are being provided to the farmers for use of critical inputs like seeds, Micro-nutrients, Plant Protection Equipments, Farm Implements, Relatively Environmental Friendly Pesticides; etc.

Besides, for quick transfer of latest crop production technology incentives are also being provided for organisation of field demonstrations and farmers/farm labourers trainings.

Agricultural Pricing Policy

1316. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SAMBHA JIRAO SHINDE:
SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE :
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:
SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture in its recent report has recommended a farmer-friendly agricultural pricing policy; and

(b) if so, what steps have been taken by Government to evolve such a pricing policy ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM) : (a) and (b) The Government is already following a farmer-friendly agricultural pricing policy. The minimum support prices announced by the Government not only cover the cost of production but also provide a reasonable margin of profit. The methodology for estimation of cost of production has recently been revised so as to make the same comprehensive and realistic with a view to ensure better returns to the farmers for their produce.

Scarcity Conditions in Gulabgarh and Thakarakot Areas of Udampur District of J & K

1317. DR. BAPU KALDATE : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware of the acute scarcity conditions in Gulabgarh and Thakarakot areas of Udampur (Jammu) district of Jammu and Kashmir and that the people are on the verge of starvation; and

(b) if so, what steps have been taken by Government to provide relief to the affected people in the area ?